



Rebula – a borderline case

There are local grapes, and local grapes. A few went global and others stayed put. In some cases, the best they can do is good for that grape. In other cases, politics, wars, or pests and diseases meant they got overlooked in spite of serious quality credibility. **High on this shortlist is Slovenia's Rebula (aka Ribolla Gialla in Italy).** It's been grown in the hilly cross-border landscape of Brda and Collio since the 13th century and shares a parent in Heunisch Weiss with famous grapes like Chardonnay, Riesling and Furmint. It's been renowned for centuries, favoured by royalty and used in lieu of money to settle bills. This huge cultural wealth nearly disappeared in Italy with the arrival of international grapes after Phylloxera but luckily hung on in the **Brda/Collio region** where it suits the dramatic steep slopes and complex marl and sandstone 'opoka' soils.

Rebula is one of the most versatile

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Caroline Gilby MW

grapes of all, though sadly Brda Home of Rebula (the conference that showcases this) was cancelled in 2020. Its faces range from complex, refreshing and elegant sparklers thanks to its high natural acidity; to refreshing, **vivid and pristine classic wines** (usually tank-fermented) – in this form it can stand proud next to wines like Albariño or Gruner Veltliner. **With a little skin contact and judicious use of oak**, it

can offer more sumptuous Burgundian or Rhone-like weight, with supple texture, spice and sapid richness rather than fruity notes. Rebula has thick skins and is also particularly suited to that tradition-revived of orange wines, with **long skin contact in barrels, concrete or even amfora** giving red-wine-like structure and ability to match food with incredible depth and savoury, saline complexity. To complete the picture, a few producers even make **super sweet Rebula from dried grapes**, balanced by its hallmark freshness.

Rebula's history gives authenticity, but it also has originality in its very specific links to the gorgeously beautiful Brda/Collio hills and the sense of place this brings – it can't be compared to any other region but judged only for what it delivers in a glass. A raft of medals at competitions like Decanter World Wine Awards shows clearly that **Rebula can deliver world-class wines in all its styles - a grape that deserves to be more widely known and enjoyed.**

BRDA, home of Rebula 2020



Dolfo Rebula 2019 91

UK: £9.05 **Looking for importer**
"Dry, extremely dry" is Dolfo's motto and this vibrant young Rebula delivers exactly that. Summer meadow flowers and white peach on the nose lead to a crisp, zesty, mouth-watering palate with a tangy mineral finish.



Klet Brda Rebula Quercus 2019 90

UK: £9.99 **Berkmann Wine Cellars**
A pure vivid tank-fermented Rebula, handpicked from old terraces. Youthful and fruit-focused in style with fresh pear, acacia and steely, salted lemon undertones. Balanced, smooth and approachable.



Medot Rebula Journey 2019 90

UK: £12 **Looking for importer**
Named for the journey of the owner's father, it brings together two winemaking approaches to highlight Rebula's crunchy apple freshness, along with skin-contact to highlight its mineral texture and spicy richness.



Zanut Rebula 2018 92

UK: £15.95 **Stone, Vine & Sun**
Old vines, indigenous yeast and 24 hours cold maceration are the secrets in this expressive, wild herb-scented Rebula. To taste there's exotic fruit, a steely backbone and appetising freshness.



Gradis'ciutta Robert Princic Rebula Sveti Nikolaj 2018 92

UK: £11.04 **Looking for importer**
A truly cross-border wine produced in Italy from vineyards in Slovenia. Vinification in 5hl casks has enhanced creamy, gently honeyed aromas with succulent flavours of fig, orange peel and baked apple.



Moro Rebula Margherita 2018 93

UK: £18.09 **Looking for importer**
A unique expression of Rebula, dried for 6 weeks then matured in Italian ceramic tanks. Inviting aromas of mango, camomile and lemon zest lead to supple flavours of candied peel and pear in this layered and appealing wine.



Edi Simčič Rebula Fojana 2018 96

UK: £40 **Bancroft Wines**
From a single vineyard of old south-facing vines. Fermentation and ageing for 10 months in oak adds a fine vanilla scent to aromas of pear and meadowsweet then the palate is gracefully elegant, silky and beautifully harmonious.



Jermann Ribolla Visvik 2017 95

UK: £54 **Enotria**
Made in Italy from Slovenian grapes, fermented in large Slavonian oak. A bouquet of exotic, golden plum and orange blossom leads onto poached pear and zesty lemon notes in this gently mineral, elegant wine.



Klet Brda Rebula Bagueri 2017 94

UK: £10.59 **Berkmann Wine Cellars**
Old terraced vineyards result in this inviting, expressive wine with hints of acacia and white peach. It's refined and beautifully textured with vibrant acidity, fresh peach fruit and a lively zesty finish.



Marjan Simčič Rebula Opoka Medana Jama Cru 2017 96

UK: £45.60 **Orbit Wines**
Grapes from 65-year-old vines were fermented with skins in concrete eggs and barrels. Aromas of exotic fruit, orange zest and mango are backed by lovely intensity of tropical fruit and tangerine, with velvety mouthfeel, fine acids and a long finish.



Kristian Keber Brda 2017 93

UK: **Boutinot**
Intriguing natural wine from a field blend of old vines, fermented in large casks with 5 months of skin maceration. It's rich amber with notes of honeysuckle, salted lemon, mango and herbs with tangy, complex, savoury flavours.



Ščurek Rebula Up 2016 97

UK: £48 **Looking for importer**
Venerable vines and 'opoka' soil give amazing grapes transformed with partial skin contact and ageing in large oak. Inviting candied peel and ripe pear aromas, overlaid with herbs lead to a wine with superb depth, vivid fruit and a mouth-watering, mineral finish.



Erzetič Amfora Rebula 2016 94

UK: £26.70 **Looking for importer**
A glowing amber wine from 7 months of maceration in amfora. The nose shows abundant notes of figs, spice, mango and bitter orange. There's serious intensity and real complexity with tangy citrus, sandalwood and a savoury, structured finish'



Ferdinand Rebula Brutus 2015 96

UK: £35.57 **Looking for importer**
Wild fermentation with skins in barrel for a whole year has given a vivid orange wine with amazing intensity and notes of apricot, candied peel and honeysuckle. Richly complex to taste with saline tang, vibrant fruit, stony texture and a lingering aftertaste.

